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THE MAGIC OF THE HORSE-SHOE, with other Folk-Lore Notes, by ROBERT MEANS LAWRENCE, M. D. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1898. Pp. iv, 344.

This handsome volume consists of a number of essays, entitled: "The Magic of the Horse-Shoe," "Fortune and Luck," "The Folk-Lore of Common Salt," "The Omens of Sneezing," "Days of Good and Evil Omen," "Superstitious Dealings with Animals," and "The Luck of Odd Numbers;" a topical index is subjoined. The point of view from which the book is prepared is explained in a prefatory note: "Superstitions, however trivial in themselves, relics of paganism though they be, and oftentimes comparable to baneful weeds, are now considered proper subjects for scientific research. . . . The development in recent years of a widespread interest in all branches of folk-lore warrants the hope that any volume devoted to this subject, and representing somewhat diligent research, may have a certain value, in spite of its imperfections. The expert folk-lorist may find much to criticise; but this book, treating of popular beliefs, is intended for popular reading." The introductory essay was prepared for the seventh annual meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society in 1895, and an abstract appeared in this Journal, vol. ix. p. 288, to which the reader may be referred for an analysis of the inquiry. In an account of the superstitions relating to salt, mention is made of the habit of placing salt before strangers, its uncongeniality to witches, the Eastern custom of confirming compacts by salt, the ominous character of salt-spilling, the use of salt in the ceremonies of the church, its employment as an amulet, the table customs connected with salt, and so on. The source of the sanctity of this substance is, without doubt, its antiseptic quality; demons, who are affiliated with corruption, have a natural terror of anything which goes to prevent that dissolution of vitality which they delight in bringing about. The custom of blessing the sneezer is usually explained on the basis of a belief that the action indicates the liability of possession by a demon, due to the temporary departure of the soul. (The citations of ancient beliefs and customs are made from treatises like those of S. Baring-Gould, rather than from the sources of the latter.) But the student will find in this book many suggestions, even although, as already noted, it is not the intention of the author to treat the subjects altogether exhaustively.

*W. W. Newell.*

THE GOLDEN MAIDEN, and other Folk-tales and Fairy Stories told in Armenia. A. G. SEKLEMIAN. Cleveland, O.: The Helman-Taylor Co. 1898. Pp. xix, 224.

This little collection is made up from the notes and reminiscences of Mr. Seklemian, and from the volumes of Sirwantzdians, "Manana," Constantinople, 1876, and "Hamov-Hodov," Constantinople, 1884. The collections being made in different parts of Armenia, the texts, according to the statement of Mr. Seklemian, somewhat differ; he wishes, however, to emphasize the point that all the stories which appear in the present volume "were taken down directly from the lips of the ignorant, unlettered peasantry of

Armenia, literally without any embellishment or addition whatever, except in the case of rude and unbecoming expressions which had to undergo some slight change." Mr. Seklemian's own district was Cilicia, where it was the custom to entertain youth, during the winter evenings, with tales of "fairies, giants, genii, dragons, knights, winged beauties, captive maidens, and other thousand and one mysterious beings." This applied not only to children, but also to grown-up people, whose principal pastime during the long winter nights was rehearsing or hearing such narratives. These Mr. Seklemian found everywhere current throughout all Armenia, with only slight local differences. In this book are given twenty-nine stories.

The tales, which may be read with pleasure, represent the mental stock of a very imaginative Oriental people, highly intelligent and creative, while lacking in book-learning, and therefore in the stage in which folk-lore is most prized, and also subject to a rapid evolution. It could not be safely concluded that, in their existing form, the stories are of great antiquity; on the contrary, they appear to have undergone recent fantastic elaboration and recombination. So much may be concluded from certain stories, of which the original form is otherwise known, and which here appear in modern transformations. In order to be useful for scientific inquiry into origins, — the most difficult of all investigations, — it would be necessary to have much more elaborate gatherings, with a comparative view of the narratives as related to the tales of adjoining populations. However, as regards tale elements, some interesting observations may be obtained. One of the tales, entitled "The Wicked Stepmother," was published in this *Journal*, vol. x. p. 135. The connection was pointed out (p. 134) with the story of Perceval as told by Crestien of Troyes. In other stories may be found mention of enchanted castles apparently untenanted, of heroes who disguise themselves as low-born youths, of snake-kings, magic rings, and other themes of popular romance. Unfortunately no index is provided. It would have been interesting had the tales been properly annotated, and brought into connection with native custom. For example, the character of the beings called in the translations fairies might well have been explained. It would appear from the tales that these are at times imagined as old women of gigantic stature, at other times as beautiful maidens. The inconsistency belongs also to ancient conceptions of fairies; but one would like to know what is the usual popular belief, and whether any worship of such beings survives.

*W. W. Newell.*

CANADIAN FOLK-LIFE AND FOLK-LORE. By WILLIAM PARKER GREENOUGH.

With illustrations by Walter C. Greenough. New York: G. H. Richmond. 1897. Pp. xii, 199.

This pleasing little volume, with its pretty illustrations, is no treatise on French Canadian customs and ideas from a scientific point of view, but rather a series of light sketches descriptive of occupations, methods of life, character, and progress of "My friends, the *habitants* of Canada," to whom the author dedicates his book. As he observes, the *habitant* is sim-